

## 1.2. FEATURES OF MULTILINGUAL EDUCATION IN A MULTICULTURAL ENVIRONMENT

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### **Formation of Cultural Identity of Bilingual Children in the Conditions of Russian Everyday Life**

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**Abstract.** In the 21st century, many children learn different languages from an early age. The teaching practices of everyday life are considered as an environment. The purpose of the study is to identify the features of the formation of the cultural identity of bilingual children in everyday life. In such circumstances, the 'guide' is an important adult who is not only a parent, but also a teacher for the child. Overcoming the binary oppositions of the culture 'friend or foe' and the development of a culture of dialogue becomes possible precisely in this context. The authors' appeal to the problem of the formation and development of the cultural identity of bilingual children in the socio-cultural conditions of the 21st century is due to a number of factors. The main results of the study are that, firstly, bilingualism and polylingualism are common everyday practices that have become an integral part of the life of a modern person. Secondly, the parents are interested in the child speaking two or more languages, which in the future will allow him to adapt in a multicultural environment and successfully build communication. Thirdly, teaching several languages from early childhood has its own specifics, since thinking and the speech of bi- and polylingual children differs from thinking and the speech of monolinguals. The conclusions reached by the authors are that the combination of online and offline technologies in teaching foreign languages contributes to the harmonious entry of students into the language environment in a multicultural world; maintaining interest in the language and the application of educational practices in everyday life is a task that is solved not only by teachers,

but also by parents; language learning from early childhood has a special effect on the child's thinking. The authors point out the problem associated with the formation of cultural identity: how much the knowledge of a foreign language and the maintenance of the practices of the 'other' culture at the everyday level ensures overcoming of binary oppositions of culture and contributes to the development of a culture of dialogue in modern communicative practices.

**Keywords:** cultural identity, language teaching, monolingual environment, non-formal learning, polylingual children

## 1. Introduction

The relevance of addressing the study of the phenomenon of bilingualism at the turn of the XX–XXI centuries is due to the very fact of the existence of the modern society in the form in which we observe it now. The loss and search for traditions, ease in overcoming distances and boundaries allows a person not only to choose and change their own cultural reality, but also to influence changes in the society as a whole. The processes of globalization associated with the integration and unification of value-semantic principles in the field of economics, politics and culture, influence the formation of the cultural identity of nations, peoples and individuals. In a multicultural world, a person has the right to choose life strategies and tactics for mastering culture, gaining special experience at the level of acculturation, socialization, identification, as a result of which a type of a polycultural personality develops. The cultural identity of such a person, as a rule, is interpreted by researchers in the context of everyday life, its processes and practices.

The practices of everyday life in the situation of the lockdown in 2020 are actively synthesized in online and offline communications. In this paper, we are not talking about the exceptional advantages and disadvantages of each of the methods of communication but emphasize the appropriateness of their use when they complement each other. To achieve educational goals, the format of online social interaction is convenient and practical, since it allows the student to 'move'/'intersect' in hypertext reality, has a multimodal nature and opens up the possibilities of multilingual communication. The advantages of placing cultural content online are the ability to transfer meanings, transmit information about cultural values to a wide range of consumers; this is the most convenient and accessible space for a large number of potential consumers; cultural content can be uploaded by a user or institution, an author, an agent aggregating the thematic content [Bokova,

2020]. In the conditions of everyday life, the appeal of teachers and students to the cultural content allows the use of communicative, educational, leisure and entertainment mechanisms that determine the formation of the identity of both an individual and a community. In offline practices, the lack of direct, live communication is compensated for; a communicative aura and empathy are created. Students experience immersion in the language environment at the level of everyday practice in different ways. For young children, when communication in the family takes place in several languages, this process is the least painful and is often perceived as natural.

For domestic research, the topic of bi- and multilingualism is traditional and is included in the range of interests of linguists, psychologists, educators and culturologists.

## **2. A theoretical insight into the problem of bilingualism**

Traditionally, a bilingual is a person who is able to use two or more languages in communication, learned naturally in early childhood, and to switch between them, and the individual does not need to make a decision or translate. Language is the realization of knowledge about the world, the experience of previous generations and culture as a whole, proficiency in several languages allows a person to understand reality in a new way, expanding the consciousness by the 'alien' image of the world, finding mutual understanding with the carriers of this image, another language and culture, helping cultural dialogue [Galavova, Teganyuk, 2019].

Since speakers of different languages have different images of the world, their understanding of various phenomena differs from each other. Any process of language acquisition implies a person's acquaintance with the culture broadcast by this language. For correct understanding of each other, it is necessary that the images of consciousness of the interlocutors coincide; otherwise, this leads to misunderstanding in intercultural communication. That is, the main reason for the misunderstanding of representatives of different cultures is not the difference in languages, but the difference in the national consciousness of the communicants [Tseitlin, Chirsheva, Kuzmina, 2015]. Polylinguism helps people to achieve a higher level of cultural development, acts as a key to accessing the world knowledge, helps to expand intercultural ties, get to know the cultural heritage of other peoples, and those who have great communication resources and opportunities to spread their own ideas achieve success [Pokamestova, 2015].

Language is a means of communication, cognition and accumulation of experience, an instrument of thinking, a means of transferring knowledge. In addition, language is a means of representing a people, a manifestation of their cultural identity. A. A. Lisenkova notes that the entire identity system is built on images and words and depends on the language that describes them [Lisenkova, 2018]. Cultural codes of different languages sometimes differ from each other so much that 'the impression of complete incomparability of the thinking and behavior of their speakers' is created [Zavyalova, 2018, 1]. The picture of the world is a 'complex system of images reflecting reality in the collective consciousness' and sometimes creates the impression of complete incompatibility of the thinking and behavior of their carriers [Karasik, 2002, 74]: the way a person sees and perceives reality, his system of values and all phenomena present in his consciousness and understanding, the existence of which he admits, is fixed in the language and becomes the property of the collective memory. The picture of the world, whether linguistic or cultural, is formed on the basis of a person's ideas about the surrounding reality, nationally and ethnically coloured.

Since the development of languages presupposes the process of comprehending the world, then through the assignment of language signs in childhood, the child's perception of the world is formed, which will further influence the development of norms, values and meanings of culture. Communicating with people, the child transforms the signs of the language into internal symbols of thinking, which are fixed in consciousness and are manifested in everyday behaviour, actions and communicative practices. The formation of cultural identity is a pressing issue for those families where they speak several languages, since children are drawn into this environment. Any manifestations of everyday life that exist in the life of parents have an impact on the process of identifying a child with a certain culture. Parents are mature members of a society with a certain cultural identity, which they daily (like the society in which the family lives) pass on in the form of values and cultural meanings to their own children. In this context, the upbringing of bi- and multilingual people in a multicultural environment helps to reduce the general cultural and ethnic tension, develop empathy and tolerance among members of society.

However, in recent decades, a person's belonging to one culture has eroded, allowing him to choose his own cultural identity. That is, cultural identity ceases to be an immutable given, always determined by the origin and

place of residence of a person. During his life, a person finds himself in different situations, enters into communication with representatives of various groups and communities, but in the conditions of the destruction of stable social ties, a person is immersed in the search for a new identity. The older he becomes, the more consciously he can make a choice in favour of this or that type of identity. In childhood, while mastering the language, the child automatically assimilates the culture becoming its representative and bearer. In the case of bi- and multilingualism, the individual becomes the bearer of not one but several cultures at once, as well as several languages.

The development of images and samples of native culture in early childhood in comparison with other cultures, along with the development of languages, does not give preferences to any of the cultures, therefore, a value judgment on the principle of 'friend or foe', 'good or bad' is removed in the minds of a bilingual expanding understanding binary oppositions that form the basis of the individual's worldview.

Bilinguals are not born 'speaking' several languages at once. The formation of bilingualism most often begins from the moment a child develops the ability to speak. Communication between parents and a child not only helps to establish a bond between them but is also vital. Constantly using hearing and catching various sound combinations and intonations, supported by the actions of adults, the child begins to assimilate not only the sound of words but also their meaning. He hears the word and gradually comes to understand that the very sound of the word does not coincide with the thing it designates but represents an 'abstraction from the thing' [Kudryavtsev, 2008]. This means that thinking which 'in unity with memory forms the basis of intelligence and mind' [Salikhova, 2018], synthesizes and analyzes the world around us. Thinking arises on the basis of reality and at the same time goes beyond the framework of 'sensory cognition'. In this way, the child learns not only the meaning of the word, but also its meaning. According to L. S. Vygotsky, the meaning is an objectively formed system of connections in the course of the history of a society behind a word, and the meaning is the individual meaning of a word (it is individual-personal and situational) [Vygotsky, 1934]. Consequently, the process of verbalization, that is, the child's mastering of speech, is the process of translating a personal meaning into a generally understandable meaning.

For a more visual understanding of the processes of language acquisition by a child, L. S. Vygotsky in his work *Thinking and Speech* gives data on

the observation of chimpanzees, the level of development of which is similar to that of a pre-schooler at different age stages. The scientist describes chimpanzees as very social animals that actively use facial expressions and gestures for communication, and also understand each other well. Due to the lack of speech, in the process of communication, in order to induce another monkey to do something necessary, the first monkey makes grasping movements to show that a banana is needed, or movements imitating walking to show that one must go along with it, etc. That is, understanding each other in chimpanzees occurs through the use of body language, as it happens in young children [Vygotsky, 1934].

Considering that at first a request for an indication is formed, and then only the connection of words, objects and actions, it is natural to surmise the child's language acquisition. Therefore, you can use this data when planning a child's teaching a foreign language: you must first use just instructions and gestures, repeat actions and name them. Observations of children show that the assimilation and understanding of speech by a child occurs not only through words, especially in early childhood, while he is still unable to speak, but also through mental images that the person who generates speech means. Thus, when addressing a child in a new language for them with a simple phrase that is not yet fully comprehensible to the child, an adult puts in a certain emotionally and intonationally coloured meaning expecting certain actions from the child. Probably, the micro movements of an adult, eye movements and intonation help the child to orientate and include linguistic intuition in active use: '... the speech behavior of an adult, even if it is intuitive, not fully comprehensible to them, promotes the child's progress in language acquisition' [Tseitlin, Chirsheva, Kuzmina, 2015, 8].

G. N. Chirsheva notes that practically everything connected with bilingualism affects its formation. That is the method, the time of language acquisition, the principles of education and the nature of language interaction, the degree of kinship of languages, their prestige in society and so on [Chirsheva, 2012, 16–17]. Researchers believe that it is easiest for a person to master a second language before the age of three, until the linguistic picture of the world of the first language has been formed. There is a version that even up to the age of 6 a second language can be mastered in the process of communication, and not learning. At the same time, in the period up to about the age of 14, a child who has fallen into a different language environment (for example, adopted in another country) may completely forget his

native language and switch to a new one. This means that the high plasticity of the child's brain can be used for the deliberate formation of bilingualism in the situation of creating an artificial multilingual environment.

### *2.1. Sub-section*

By everyday practices, we mean a series of actions that are repeated on a regular basis, not amenable to the influence of the external environment, that is, taking place every day. These practices have the following characteristics: presence of a social context; recurrence and reproducibility of events in everyday life; spatio-temporal and territorial limitations. The main types of everyday practices include game practices, educational, labour, household, cultural and leisure, experience transfer practices, communication practices, consumer, religious, volunteer, health protection practices; deviant and other practices that arise situationally in various societies and families. In the context of the formation of polylingualism, game practice, educational, household and leisure practices become the main ones. Educational practices are those that aim directly at mastering a certain skill, for example, studying shapes and colours, teaching reading, writing, memorizing poems, etc. This also includes watching cartoons and using various multimedia technologies (applications on a smartphone or tablet, educational games, etc.)

By introducing the child to the multilingual reality, the naturalness and 'commonness' of using several languages in life is demonstrated. Through the creation of a unique cultural space around the child, he acquires the opportunity to master all the necessary social skills and abilities without changing his place of residence and at the same time staying in a familiar family environment. The game becomes commonplace, a natural practice of communicating in another language. As communication in a foreign language ceases to be something special, the element of the game may disappear, giving way to other practices, in particular, educational or entertainment. You can also return to, and update, the use of languages through the introduction of the game.

Mastering the language, a person not only learns to use ready-made canonical schemes, but also, connecting linguistic intuition, to influence the language, creatively transform the experience gained through a language game. It becomes one of the most important means of forming a linguistic picture of the world, since the language itself appears and is mastered in its systemic nature, through representation, and later on comprehension, understanding of binary oppositions. Everyday life, although it contains

an element of stability, is subject to change and promotes the manifestation of creative activities.

One of these is artistic and creative activity. It is determined by E. G. Kalyuzhnoy as 'a type of personality activity aimed at the perception, creation and / or interpretation of works of art or other products of artistic creation in order to generate new meanings in the appropriate motivational, plot, figurative forms, as well as their transformation, taking into account already existing motives, the plot, images and symbols of world culture and art' [Kalyuzhnaya, 2018]. The generation of new meanings and the introduction of novelty are those characteristics that allow us to consider artistic and creative activity as a means for mastering culture and language. Artistic and creative activity allows one to master reality in the unity of knowledge, creativity and self-expression of the subject of activity.

In our opinion, the following can be attributed to the types of artistic and creative activity that are most applicable to the situation of mastering several languages by a child and are interesting for him: drawing, modelling, vocals and music, design (applique work, origami etc.), as well as oral creativity.

The simplest type of artistic and creative activity, implemented by parents from the moment the child is born, is vocal. Regular listening to children's songs and nursery rhymes not only has a general developmental and entertaining effect on the baby, but also teaches him/her to distinguish the sounds, intonations and words of the language used. In a few months (at the age of 8 months and older), the child will be able to independently reproduce the melodies and actively respond emotionally (smile, laughter) and physically (claps, active body movements) in response to familiar music. The same applies to the use of fiction and elements of folklore: poems, nursery rhymes, finger games and fairy tales. Games, fairy tales and poems traditional for a particular culture should be included in language practices as soon as the opportunity arises. Prose and poetry reflect not only the mood of the author, but also broadcast traditional values and norms, which means that the child subconsciously reads them and takes them as 'his own'. Immediately after birth, the child only listens, and as he grows up and speech appears, he begins to reproduce texts, including learning to formulate his own texts on their basis.

### **3. Results and discussions**

Despite the fact that the process of forming thinking and speech in early childhood follows different paths, at the age of about two years they alternate,



and then thinking becomes verbal, the child actively studies and remembers words, active speech is formed. Speaking can take longer for multilingual children than for monolingual children. And the inclusion of language in everyday practices, which are characterized by repetition and are an integral part of family life, not only contribute to the socialization of the child, but also have a beneficial effect on the development of thinking and replenishment of vocabulary. For example, these are games, reading children's literature, memorizing poems, organizing leisure activities (walking, watching cartoons in a foreign language, etc.) or solving everyday issues (washing, dressing etc.).

The child's language acquisition depends on the role that an important adult plays in this process, since the latter supports and/or organises communication. If in the traditional socialisation system the native language is acquired spontaneously, then in the process of teaching another language, the parent and/or teacher consciously focus on the equivalence of languages and pay increased attention to the formation of a multilingual picture of the world. At the same time, the level of language proficiency of the parents and/or teachers themselves is not decisive.

When connecting various means of creating a language environment (books, cartoons, limiting language space and time, and so on) and a systematic approach, in a significant number of cases known to us, mastering a second language (most often English) in Russian cities is successful. On the way of forming the child's ability to speak two languages, it is necessary to make efforts for a long time so as not to lose the already obtained result [Protasova, 2013; Salikhova, 2018].

There are several principles for the formation of children's bilingualism: 'one person — one language', 'one situation — one language' or 'one country — one language', the temporal and subject-thematic principle, the principle of 'outside listener' and so on. The most widespread principle is 'one person — one language' (or one parent — one language), which was formulated by M. Grammon [see: Barron-Hauwaert Suzanne, 2004]. It represents a restriction on the use of a language by a specific person. For example, the mother always speaks to the child in English, and the father in Russian. It is believed that in this way, purity in the use and acquisition of language by the child can be achieved. Another principle widely used in the world is the so-called local, when the use of languages is divided according to the place of use: at home they speak one language, and outside

the house in another; or, when, while in a country, the family speaks one language, and in another one in another language.

Since 1913, after the publication of the study by J. Ronjat [Ronjat, 1913] and until recently, in the scientific community it was believed that in order to obtain a high-quality result, that is, a child's fluency in several languages, it is necessary to distinguish speech in different languages by clearly tracking who and what language a person speaks with the child. In reality, however, the distinction should primarily relate to the use of one language in one sentence. The rest can be variable in nature.

In our opinion, the most balanced principle in the situation of educating bilinguals in a monolingual family may be the temporal principle, when both parents alternate communication with children in different languages at regular intervals. Besides, the separation of languages can be built on the subject-thematic principle (speaking in a certain language on some topics) and the principle of 'outside listener' who assumes that parents communicate with the child in one language, and among themselves in another language. Thus, regular listening to speech in another language leads to the fact that the child also learns this language; however, he may not speak it, if there is no such a need, forming passive bilingualism [Chirsheva, 2012].

These principles can be applied both separately and together in various variations (for example, a mother speaks to her child only in English and only at home, that is a combination of the personal principle 'one person — one language' and the local principle — only at home). With the help of various principles of the formation of bilingualism, parents can influence this process, helping the movement or slowing it down. Of course, the benefits accruing to children who can communicate in several languages outweigh the difficulties and fears in the formation of bilingualism. Multilingual children, in particular, have the ability to give clearer definitions and concepts in communication with their peers, since they are metalinguistic and have more pronounced abilities than their monolingual interlocutors. Bilingualism has a positive effect on the child's brain, decreasing the likelihood of Alzheimer's and Parkinson's in adulthood [Suvarna Alladi]. It was assumed that the ability of a person to speak two or more languages can delay the development of dementia by an average of 4–5 years. This assumption was, however, later refuted [Berkes, Bialystok].

Since the fixed result of language acquisition is significantly delayed (you need to wait for the child to reach about 15 years of age), this leads to the fact

that not all parents 'go the distance' to the end. Some parents at some point decide that it is no longer advisable to spend time on languages, as a result of which bilingualism is either lost or not even formed.

It is important to note that mastering several languages as native languages most easily occurs at the age of three years; the previous fact of immersion in the language, listening and communicating in it do not pass without leaving a trace, and it seems more than to return the knowledge that was already acquired by a child before reaching three years an easy option compared to learning and mastering the language by a child completely after three years of age. While forming, multilingualism, in particular — bilingualism — has a great influence on the thinking of the child, his mental abilities and the peculiarities of the functioning of the brain. Unlike monolingual children, bilingual children do not learn two languages so clearly and completely non-linearly. Often, such children begin to speak later, and the vocabulary in each of the languages they learn consists of fewer words than in monolingual children who speak selectively in any of these languages [Efremenko, 2018].

In general, the speech development of a bilingual child follows the same principles as the development of monolingual children. So, at the age of three months, the child listens to sounds and reacts to them, emits vocalizations, and then goes on to babble, indicating his/her needs with a cry. At the age of 3 to 6 months, s/he already understands angry intonations or calms down when s/he hears the mother's voice, makes many different sounds, even when s/he is alone, and also understands the expression on the face of an adult. Further, up to 9 months, the baby already begins to react to his name and the word 'no', tries to imitate sounds and respond to speech addressed to him/her, and participates in finger games. By the age of one, the child already knows his/her name, and can show or bring something in response to a question, pronounces not only vowels, but also more and more consonant sounds. By the age of one and a half, the baby already knows the parts of the body and understands about 200 words, several times in a row, many times a day, tries to pronounce a word.

By the age of two, the child's vocabulary is already about 500 words, of which he can independently pronounce up to 300, combining them into sentences. From two to four years, the child's perceptual vocabulary increases to 1500 words when using several hundred in his own speech including cohesive devices ('because' etc.), can tell about what has already been or

will be. From 4 to 6 years old, a child begins to understand almost everything that they talk about at home, watches and understands films, begins to read and write. The child's active vocabulary grows up to 10,000–14,000 words, the child learns to explain words, can compare them with each other and highlight sounds, the native language is currently learned by the child by about 50 % [Protasova, 2013, 20–22]. However, in reality, speech lag is typical for 5–10 % of children, and moreover, it is 4 times more common in boys, regardless of whether the child is bilingual or multilingual [Steiner, 2015, 31].

Nevertheless, bilingual children, as a rule, quickly remember where and when one or another language is used, clearly distinguish with whom and how to speak, intuitively choose the necessary words and expressions for various situations and ask questions 'indicating the development of their metalinguistic abilities'. Research data indicate that bilinguals have one system of perception and two (or more) different systems of speech production in each of the languages [Andreeva, 2009]. All this suggests that the brain and thinking, as well as speech activity, in bilinguals are built in a special way, which differs from the organisation of the same systems in monolingual people.

Another important feature of the organization of the speech activity of bilinguals is the situation of mixing languages, which is alternating switching between languages in the process of their use. It should be noted that for bilinguals the problem of mixing languages is quite typical. With the emerging bilingualism and, accordingly, the presence of two separate language systems, the addition of certain words to accurately convey the meaning of what has been said is an auxiliary function that does not affect the quality of language proficiency and perception. As a rule, this phenomenon is temporary and passes with the establishment of confident speech in both (several) languages.

In the course of a family experiment (two parents, two daughters and a son) which has a longitudinal character, it can be argued that the best option is to teach a child from birth to speak not one, but two or three languages. Without experience and in the absence of a large amount of information about the methods and features of bilingual education, the family usually goes through difficulties and doubts, drawing up a plan on their own and gaining the language acquisition experience by their children, first Chinese and Russian, and then English.

So, the eldest daughter Dasha began to learn to speak Chinese from three months. By the age of one, she already understood all the speech addressed to her, and closer to one and a half years she could already construct phrases.

It turned out that Chinese words are easier for a child to master, because they are often much shorter than Russian ones. Compare: 'open' — 开 (kai), 'cat' — 猫 (mao), 'fish' — 鱼 (yu), and so on. After mastering simple speech constructions in Chinese, the child moved on to learning Russian words. By the age of two, she could already easily speak and express her thoughts in Chinese and Russian, communicated with native speakers and did not see any difference between herself and other children. In this way the child learned the basic norms of languages, thanks to which the linguistic picture of the world was formed. After that, at the age of two and a half, there was a 'connection' to the English language, which contributed to the easier mastering of the skills of speaking. Over the next 5 years, the child actively communicated with peers and in the family in three languages, while learning to write and read in each of them. It is interesting to note that the presence of examples of correct reproduction of words in the required languages in everyday life at the early stages of language acquisition played a certain role: the child speaks all three languages without an accent. During the period from one and half years to four, the child spoke Russian with a Chinese accent, which became a manifestation of linguistic identity. Proficiency in several languages by the age of 7 determines the basic foundations of a multilingual picture of the world, which will further contribute to the removal of contradictions in a multicultural and multilingual world.

The second daughter heard speech in three languages since birth, and the number of people expressing thoughts in these languages was growing. Now three people around her (parents and an older sister) regularly spoke in several languages. From the very birth, several languages were present in the child's life, which influenced the lack of coherent speech up to two years. After the age of two, the child began to speak immediately in sentences, mainly in English. The use of the Russian language did not happen immediately. English has become one of the main languages, including Russian, for the sisters' communication in everyday life. The speech of the second child in all languages does not have an accent by which it would be possible to determine linguistic affiliation and identity. From that moment on, the multilingual environment in the family became an integral part of everyday life. Speaking about the principles of teaching, the most optimal for a family is the principle of alternating languages by day. In this way the development of various speech patterns on all basic everyday topics occurs, the child does not have time to forget phrases in another language and does not have time

to get out of practice. Correlation of language and norms of everyday life contributes to the formation of cultural identity.

It is worth noting that the language of the environment is a serious competitor for other languages that children learn. Indeed, it is necessary to minimize the introduction of words in this language, however, one should not forget about the development of the culture of this language. This means that it is necessary to include literature, songs and everyday communication in this language sufficiently so that the child can grow up as a full-fledged bearer of this culture. It makes sense to clearly select the incoming information whenever possible, not to duplicate cartoons and books in different languages, to give preference to literature and other works of art and culture in the original language, and so on, in order to make language acquisition as interesting and concentrated as possible.

The cultural identity of children in a given family is a conglomerate of identities. Of course, the fact that the children live in Russia all their lives affects their perception of themselves. Now, when the identification process has not yet been completed, it is difficult to state with certainty that the children are representatives of a particular culture. However, the fact that there is a combination of Chinese, American and Russian lifestyles in the family leaves its mark. In the family, they not only speak several languages, but also watch cartoons in these languages, learn songs and finger games. Besides, they attend a Russian-Chinese kindergarten. Holidays and folklore greatly influence the formation of cultural identity. So, for example, every year the family celebrates Catholic Christmas, then New Year and Spring Festival, or Chinese New Year. When changing teeth, the Tooth Fairy comes to the eldest daughter and brings a small gift. The family monitors the release of new interesting cartoons in the original languages and watches them. At home they prepare not only Russian dishes, but also Chinese (and eat with chopsticks), and sometimes American. The literature read to them and by them has a great influence on the children and their self-identification. Works of fiction written in Chinese and English in their original versions are read in these languages, which allows them in their understanding of reality to be guided not only by the traditional values of the Russian culture, conveyed in fairy tales in Russian, but also in fairy tales in Chinese and English. So, the simplest of children's favourite fairy tales are Goldilocks and the Three Bears in English and 小蝌蚪找妈妈 (Little Tadpoles Looking for Mum) in Chinese. We believe that in a situation where a child has a sufficient

amount of communication with peers in the languages studied, the formation of cultural identity and the formation of a multicultural personality occur more smoothly and effectively, since, having friends with other ethnicities and understanding their speech and way of life, the child begins to associate him/herself not only with his/her parents as bearers of culture, but also with that ethnicity that is extensively and regularly present in his/her environment.

Connecting online resources and informative content by parents when teaching the languages to children, participating in groups and sharing experiences on social networks (blogging on Instagram (2015–2020)), creating a Youtube channel in modern conditions and especially in lockdown circumstances optimize educational and leisure practice of the language acquisition. Parents, being at the same time teachers for children, perform the functions of a language curator within the framework of the cultural content, selecting and systematizing information (information content, methodological, psychological and pedagogical information). They become guides for their children into the world of culture.

The given experiment is of a private nature and is incomplete. But the experience gained by its participants demonstrates the importance of including parents, children and the intimate environment in the process of learning languages, the need to use online and offline communication technologies. The meaningfulness and understanding by parents of everything that happens in this plot is of particular value.

#### **4. Conclusions**

Scientists do not know exactly how the switching of languages occurs in the consciousness of one person, but it is known that it occurs automatically and is not realized by the bilingual him/herself. In fact, such a code switching system is also typical for monolinguals in situations of use, for example, of different styles of speech in various life situations, with the only difference that bilinguals use not just different styles, but also different languages.

Roger T. Bell gives the following example: a six-year-old boy who speaks Italian at home and attends school in English, having difficulty describing the words 'caregiver' and 'playground' in Italian, told his parents about school events at home. Since he did not know the specific words regularly used by the boy in school, he decided to insert words in English into the sentence in Italian. Thus, the meaning of what was said was understood, the code switching system was not violated, and the problem situation was resolved [Bell, 1980].

Mastering several languages as native ones occurs most gently, as a rule, in early childhood under the influence of the culture of native speakers. Most often, bilinguals are brought up in international families, or in families whose mother tongue differs from the official language of the territory in which they live. However, at present, the cases of bilingual education in monolingual monocultural families have also become more frequent. Since language is acquired through culture, and culture through language, different mechanisms of mastering one language or culture affect the mastery of another one. The formation of a child's cultural identity occurs naturally and harmoniously in the process of everyday life, which affects the child's perception of reality and the development of the linguistic picture of the world. The culture is absorbed by the child through communication in the language that permeates everyday life as a familiar and close environment. It is the world of life that has a tremendous impact on the formation of the personality, which means that through making changes in everyday life and daily practices, we can influence the formation of a child's cultural identity.

The assimilation of the norms, values and meanings that form the language and culture basis in everyday practices act as the main mechanism for the formation of a multicultural personality. Receiving new information, the child ranks it according to the principle 'friend or foe', which also influences the formation of his/her ideas about the world. In our opinion, games and everyday practices have the greatest potential in the situation of mastering the culture by a child, especially in early childhood, since educational practices may not yet be available to him/her or not interesting to him/her.

By creating an artificial multilingual environment, parents contribute to the formation of a natural bi- or polylingualism in children, expanding the possibilities for choosing life strategies and tactics of children's behaviour in the future. The formation of the cultural identity of any child occurs continuously, at least until s/he reaches adolescence. In a situation with bilingual children, in the process of mastering a culture, other mechanisms are connected, associated with the development of values in everyday life through direct activity, as well as the role of a parent and/or a significant adult who becomes a teacher for the child. Multicultural interaction, which develops in a family that supports everyday practices characteristic of different cultures and consolidated in the language, serves as the basis for the formation of a multicultural personality, and also helps to implement interaction with the 'bypass' contradictions and relieve tension (social, cultural, national, etc.



etc.) that arise in situations of communication with representatives of other cultures and differ at the level of cultural identity.

***The cultural identity of a multilingual person*** is a multifaceted structure that includes a person's identification with certain cultures and their involvement in these cultures, as well as the ability to influence their life. The thinking of an individual formed under the influence of heterogeneous cultures, perceives their manifestations as 'their own', which contributes to the development of a dialogue in a multicultural world.

Linguistic identity is one of the basic elements of the formation of cultural identity. In connection with this, the concept of a linguistic picture of the world has been concretized, into which, in the process of mastering several languages, elements of other cultures are "included". Multilingualism and bilingualism, in particular, are extremely common in the modern world. Mastering several languages at the same time, a person masters the value-semantic potential of cultures, fixed / reflected / embodied in each language.

Everyday life in the process of forming a multicultural personality acts as a 'melting pot'/'melting crucible' (I. Zanguill): cultural identity is acquired through the assimilation of the experience of culture, presented in various forms. The main mechanism developed in culture and become traditional is the development of values in everyday life through activities. For children, this is creative activity, including games, everyday and situational elements, as well as a language game. The parent thus acts as a teacher, ensuring the child's organic entry into the multicultural world.

### **Conflict of Interest**

The authors have no conflict of interest to declare.

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